

Undergrads benefit from faculty advising

By KELLY McNALLY
Staff Reporter

For students trying to juggle work, school and a new set of undergraduate requirements, regular visits with an adviser are crucial. But most students are as diligent about visiting their advisers as they are about scheduling regular check-ups with their dentists.

Maybe that's because getting an appointment with an adviser can be like pulling teeth.

Patrick McBride, director of New Student Enrollment for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, said it was more critical now to see an adviser than it has been in previous years.

"With the university's new general education requirements, not to talk to your adviser could delay your graduation by just not looking up the right part of the undergraduate bulletin," McBride said.

But for some students, consulting an adviser is a difficult task because of schedule conflicts. When advisers are in their offices, they often are busy with another student or other tasks.

Ryan Anderson, a freshman general studies major, said he was hesitant to contact his adviser because he knew the adviser had a busy schedule.

Anderson said he fears his questions may not be important compared to questions of the many students his adviser sees each day.

"It's not like talking to your high school guidance counselor," he said.

Most high school guidance counselors make advising their only job and are not required to teach. At the university, professors combine teaching, research and advising into one time-consuming job.

Mark van Roojen, assistant professor and undergraduate adviser in the department of philosophy, said he

didn't feel advising was a burden. He said he spent fewer than five hours a week advising.

Van Roojen said that within an average year he sees more than half of the 50 students assigned to him.

However, in larger colleges, such as the College of Business Administration, meeting with a faculty adviser is difficult.

CBA tries to make up for this by opening a student advisory center where students can receive advice on class registration.

Leslie McPherran, a senior business administration major and a CBA student adviser, said visiting a student adviser rather than faculty adviser gives someone a fellow student's perspective.

The student advisers are taking the same classes as the students they advise and can give a better perspective on the courses, she said. In a peak month, the student advisory center has received as many as 11,000 visits.

McPherran said the service helped the advisers as well as the students because many advisers had little time to devote to advising.

Alexia Scott, a senior biology major, said it was difficult to find the time to meet with her faculty adviser. Her alternative is the Biology Advising Center, where two or three students are available to talk to instead of one faculty member.

Scott said she could have figured out her schedule on her own, but her adviser was helpful. Scott said she hoped to graduate in four years, and her adviser has helped by keeping a checklist of the classes she has completed.

McBride said students are triggered to see their adviser when the new class schedule comes out, but that they probably should go before then. Oct. 21 is the first day to register for the spring semester.

Campus jobs not hurt by minimum wage hike

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-ees' current wages already were above the minimum level.

Douglas Zatecha, UNL director of housing, said most employees were paid above minimum wage to stay competitive with other jobs offering higher wages.

"I'd say that about 90 percent of our students were above minimum wage at the time of the increase," Zatecha said.

Zatecha said the minimum wage increase mainly affected those UNL Housing employees with jobs requiring a lower level of skill.

The lower-skill jobs had a set wage 25 cents above the old minimum wage, cutting in half the impact of this year's 50-cent wage increase, Zatecha said.

The Office of Campus Recreation also paid most student employees more than minimum wage at the time of the wage increase.

But Rod Chambers, financial director of Campus Recreation, said even these higher wages were increased as a result of the minimum-wage increase.

"Just about all of our students increased 50 cents or so," Chambers said.

He explained the increases in wages were in response to a student employee scale that uses a variety of variables to place students in five main wage levels.

When the minimum wage increased, all five wage levels increased accordingly to avoid "compression."

Chambers estimated the first stage of the minimum-wage hike would cost Campus Recreation \$35,000 to \$40,000.

When the second stage of the wage hike increases minimum wage by an additional 40 cents, Chambers said, the overall cost to Campus Recreation could reach \$100,000.

Chambers said options still were being discussed to cover the cost of the recent minimum-wage increase, and the later increase of 40 cents would be handled by requesting more student fees money.

Larry Kahle, associate dean of libraries, said the impact of the minimum-wage increase on the UNL Libraries will not be extremely damaging if the libraries could hire more work-study students. The libraries pay only 20 percent of their work-study employees' wages, he said. The majority of work-study student wages is paid by the federal government.

Daryl Swanson, director of the Nebraska Unions, said the minimum-wage increase only affected half of the unions' employees.

Those employees previously earned \$4.50 an hour. The cost of upgrading their wage to \$4.75 an hour was "absorbed into our budget," Swanson said.

When the second half of the minimum wage increase takes effect, Swanson said, the unions probably will need an additional \$20,000 per year.

"About half of this money will come from student fees and half will come from revenue we produce," Swanson said.

While the minimum wage may cause budget increases for some campus employers, Swanson said student employees deserved the increase.

"I think it's overdue," Swanson said. "Our students have been underpaid for quite some time."



MATT MILLER/DN

The Goodyear blimp, the "Spirit of Akron," flies over the State Capitol Tuesday afternoon. The blimp will leave Lincoln by Friday.